

**ADVISORY COUNCIL ON
AGING AND DISABILITY SERVICES
Meeting Minutes**

**June 14, 2002
Alaska Building, 13th Floor
Seattle, WA 98104**

ADVISORY COUNCIL

Present: Marc Avni, Martha Becker, Pat Carroll, Gabe Cohen,, Thelma Coney, Timmie Faghin, Lee Gaylor, Will Parry, Karen Sluiter, Helen Spencer, Suzanne Wiley, Fred Yee

Absent: Steve Colwell , Suzanne Gehring, Randy Hayhurst

Excused: Cleo Corcoran, Juanita Grant, John Kennedy, Mae Shields, Greg Stack

Guests: Sadikifu Akina-James, John Holecek, Ven, Knox, David Okimoto, David Trainer, Larry Verhei, Lisa Yeager

STAFF: Rosemary Cunningham, Peggy O'Brien-Murphy, Pam Piering, Maria Ramirez, Allison Ruff, Linda Woodall, Karen Winston

Minutes

Karen Sluiter, Chair, convened the meeting at 12:00 p.m. The minutes of June 14, 2002 were approved.

Program:

Dialogue with Seattle-King County ADS Advisory Council Sponsors:

David Okimoto, Director of the United Way of King County, gave an overview of the upcoming changes. United Way is changing focus to address community impact. They are in dialogue with Snohomish County United Way on combining their programs to do a better job raising money and serving their respective counties. Historically, the focus has been to raise money and distributing funds to agencies that do good work. (United Way currently supports 160 agencies.) Now they are considering new ways to impact communities. David used the example of keeping elders independent for as long as possible. If there is agreement that this is an important goal, then the new focus of United Way will be to take it on as a community-wide indicator for all elders in the whole of King County - not just certain groups (i.e. poor elders, or ethnic elders). "If the focus is on how to keep elders as independent as possible would you restrict funding a finite group of agencies to do that? No. There are many ways to accomplish the goal – such as helping people who work in neighborhoods, connecting and increasing volunteer efforts, working with the media, state legislators, local government, school districts. There are many things one can do to promote independence for elders." United Way, aware that funding has become flat, is trying to do a better job of attracting resources and become more effective within the community at large. David also encouraged the Council and Aging and Disability Services (ADS) to take a comprehensive look at all issues related to elders, including developing ideas on how to improve institutional care.

Ven Knox is the Director of Department of Human Services, City of Seattle. In this position she is also the manager of the city agency that administers social services funding for aging programs countywide within the Department. This funding comes primarily from Federal and State resources and the ADS Division's City budget. Because of the current crisis of reduced Seattle General Fund revenues, the Mayor is requiring all City departments to make proposed reductions of 9% and 15% for the coming biennium budget of 2003-04. A 15% reduction translates to \$193,000 for the Aging and Disability Services Division. Departmental proposals will go to the Mayor July 1 and the Mayor will send his recommendations to the City Council on September 23. The City Council will vote on a final budget before Thanksgiving. Ven said the tight

budget for the City is more of an economic issue than a structural issue and hopefully the revenue picture will turn around sometime in the next year or two. When the economy does turn around we can expect a regional rebound response.

Other issues of concern are:

- Cost of living effects on seniors. The Mayor's Office for Seniors (MOSC) has more seniors seeking employment to supplement pensions they receive. Also, calls for utility assistance have doubled. In 2000 there were 7,600 requests for assistance. In 2001 those requests increased to 16,700.
- New enrollments for people with disabilities for 2001 were 2,700. For the first half of 2002 there are 900 new enrollments.
- What effect will the economy have on the September housing levy? Over the course of 7 years, this levy would raise \$86 Million for rental preservation and rental production, offer a small increase in home ownership assistance, create neighborhood development opportunities, and provide emergency rental assistance and eviction prevention assistance. Unfortunately, tight economic situations make it difficult for citizens to support levies.

Advisory Council skills in advocating for seniors and people with disabilities are critical during these times of economic hardships.

Sadikifu Akina-James, is the manager of the Community Services Division within King County Department of Community & Human Services. She addressed the fiscal crisis in County revenues - a shortfall in general funds of approximately \$52 million. Unlike the City, this budget problem is not economic, but a structural issue within the County. The last 10 years of incorporations and annexations in the County have greatly diminished the revenue base. Although Aging Services currently has discretionary funding of \$775,000, the County Executive has recommended, and the Council is considering, phasing out all non-mandated human services. The Executive's recommendations for cut programs are expected in 1-2 weeks. Of the \$10.6 million in the Community Services Division that currently funds discretionary services, \$4.2 million will be recommended for reduction in 2003. The remaining funding will be removed in 2004. Final decisions regarding aging services reductions will follow the proposed Aging Services Funding Policy Guidelines

The Council Council's Regional Policy Committee, represented by elected officials from county government, suburban cities and Seattle, will do a review of Human Services and look for funding solutions for services that might be reduced in their areas. Although a work plan has not been formally adopted, they hope to have a product out by early fall so KC and suburban cities will be able to use it in making budget decisions. The Advisory Council may want to have input into this process and in the KC budget process. Executive Sims will make his formal budget proposal to the KC Council in October.

Other County issues of concern are:

- Countywide access is a high priority. Especially in rural and unincorporated areas where access to many services is very difficult. Transportation is always a first area of concern because without it other services become unavailable.
- Adult Day Health is also serious concern in unincorporated areas – again because of access problems. Respite care and affordable housing in rural areas are other priority areas for the County.

Sponsors and Advisory Councilmembers broke into small groups for further discussion.

Director's Report:

Pam Piering spoke to the US Commission on Asian American Affairs when they recently met in Seattle. Discussion included how we serve Asian American older adults. Pam reported to the Commission on our family caregiving grants, targeted areas of the Eastside and South King, and establishment of a satellite center at Chinese Information & Service Center (CISC) in Bellevue. Chinese elders are coming out to the senior centers in response to offered programs. We were commended by the Commission on our services. In order to serve Pacific Asian populations well, it's necessary to have a network of providers who are well known in the community and, who are culturally competent – not an overnight feat, it takes years of work. Issues discussed by the Commission also covered housing, transportation, and federal programs to produce more housing. The commission toured Legacy House, the Kin-On Nursing Home and the Keiro Nursing Home. Pam noted that while we have wonderful resources and are certainly ahead of many communities, there is always more to do.

Growing needs in prescription drugs and Medicaid are demanding huge chunks of the budget. OMB has asked the state agencies to segment their programs into high, medium and low priorities. We expect to see Medicaid cuts for seniors. The State Council on Aging is sending letters to the governor and legislators requesting SCSA not be cut. Parallel advocacy efforts of the Advisory Council are especially important.

Pam thanked the AC for their work on the supplemental allocation process. Letters, public hearing, sponsors approval, contract amendments have brought a sigh of relief from our service providers. We were able to give a 2% cost of living increase to all our service providers – County and City. We also increased some nutrition programs for one-time investments in kitchen improvements. We're expanding the Information & Assistance Program for longer hours, e-mail, web-sites and better overall outreach.

Larry Verhei commented that one of the problems with marketing human services is they are often heard about in negatives – what they don't have. We know among ourselves what we do have, but the general population doesn't hear about what we're trying to preserve. The public needs to be aware of these efforts and there are ways to develop awareness. Public Service Announcements are important. We need help to get the word out. (**Gabe Cohen** immediately invited Larry to join the Outreach & Advocacy Committee.) Pam said she would check with Clayton Fong, head of National Asian Pacific Center on Aging, (NAPCA) who convened the meeting with the U.S. Commission on Asian American Affairs - to see if there is some way to do a promotional report on that meeting. Helen agreed with Larry and suggested that the 2% cost of living increase for City & County service providers should also be in the news.

Committee Reports:

Health Care Task Force: **Martha Becker** reported that in lieu of their June meeting, the task force went to a KC Department of Transportation seminar on accessible housing. She said it was an excellent session, attended by both government and non- government agencies, on how to find needs, gaps and possible solutions. In July there will be a joint meeting with the Outreach & Advocacy Committee on prescription drugs issues. In August the task force will not meet. A letter of appreciation was sent to Sen. Murray thanking her for introducing the Medifair Bill. This Bill would boost reimbursements for states that receive Medicaid reimbursements below the national average. Currently, rates range from \$10,373 in D.C. to \$3,053 in Iowa. Washington State's average is \$3,921. The overall average per Medicare enrollee is \$5,490. Disparity in rates is said to be due to high populations in some states. **Helen Spencer** suggested the difference in cost to Medicare was in part due to longer stays in hospitals in cities like NY and Boston. Because other areas had shorter hospital stays, costs were pro-rated. She said New York and Florida have high voting populations and politicians are unwilling to reduce funding to these states.

Pam & Will Parry attended a press conference where the Bill for fairness in Medicare rates was promoted. The Washington delegation support includes both Senators Murray and Cantwell. House sponsorship includes Representatives Adam Smith, Jim McDermott, Brian Baird, Norm Dicks and Rick Larson.

Marc Avni suggested another important disparity affecting medical care delivery across the country is malpractice insurance rates for doctors. He gave the example of an orthopedic surgeon in Delaware paying \$3,000 a year while a colleague, across the border in Pennsylvania, pays \$100,000 for the same insurance.

Outreach & Advocacy: **Gabe Cohen** reported on the Legislative Forum planning discussion. There will be another meeting for co-sponsors on June 28 after the Advisory Council Executive Committee meeting. Although a framework has been proposed, issues of design, format, timing and location still have to be worked out. Unlike our previous forums, this year the Forum will follow the November election.

An action alert on prescription drugs will be going out to all AC members. It will also be on our web site.

Technology Task Force: **Timmie Faghin** reported on work-meetings with **Peggy O'Brien-Murphy** and **Andrea Yip**. Advisory Council minutes, agendas, newsletters, action alerts are now posted on a regular basis. The Task Force goal is to have the web site used by AC members and for it to become the Council's primary communication tool. Timmie asked committee chairs to send information, news items, meeting announcements, agendas and minutes to Peggy for the web site. She handed out copies of the home page and asked everyone review the website and send one comment or suggestion to her or Peggy.

The AC home page can be accessed at <http://www.cityofseattle.net/humanservices/ads/AdvisoryCouncil/>

Planning & Allocations: **Karen Sluiter** reported in **Suzanne Wiley's** absence. A June 12 meeting summary, prepared by **Selina Chow**, was distributed for a brief discussion. The 2002 revised base allocation is \$7,8,299. The committee is now working on issues of funding availability and spreading possible cuts. P&A will meet again on June 26 to discuss different planning options. Recommendations will be presented to the Advisory Council in July then forwarded to the Sponsors. A public hearing will be scheduled for August, and final adoption by the Sponsors will be in late August.

Announcements

Pam, Allison Ruff and **Margaret Casey** met with **City Councilmember Peter Steinbrueck** to discuss Universal Design (UD). Councilmember Steinbrueck is working on language to be implemented in the housing levy to encourage UD. We are also in the early stages of developing a UD seminar for designers and developers. Pam, who serves on the n4a National Policy Committee, said the committee has added language on Universal Design to the n4a National Housing Policy.

Will Parry reported that the Washington Low Income Housing Institute is actively working to support the National Housing Trust Fund legislation. The overall goal is to build 1.5 million units over the next 10 years. It's the most important federal housing legislation now pending.

Helen Spencer mentioned the housing seminar she organized in Auburn. Various housing options were discussed and it was a most successful event. Seniors from Auburn High School earned community services credit by helping out at the seminar. Helen said it was an excellent intergenerational partnership.

THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 2:00 PM

Next Meeting:

JULY 12, 2002, Noon - 2:00 PM

Crossroads Parks and Community Center

16000 NE 10th Street - Bellevue, WA

Suzanne Wiley, Secretary-Treasurer _____